

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 134940
ORIGIN SAB-02

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 PA-02 PRS-01 USIE-00 PM-04
NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 INRE-00
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DRAFTED BY S/AB:DLAZAR:BK

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 134940

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, PN

SUBJECT: STATE DEPARTMENT NOON PRESS BRIEFINGS

1. THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE AT THE NOON BRIEFING
ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8:

A. I HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT, WE DIDN'T ANNOUNCE YESTERDAY AT
NOON BUT ANNOUNCED LATER IN THE AFTERNOON. THE PANAMA
CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS WHICH RECESSED MAY 31ST WILL
RESUME HERE THIS AFTERNOON. THE TIME IS 3:00 P.M. THE
PARTICIPANTS ARE THE SAME. QUESTIONS?

Q. WHY WAS IT MOVED BACK AGAIN AND MOVED FORWARD? A. THE
PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATORS WHO HAD GONE HOME FOR CONSULTATION
AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE LAST ROUND COMPLETED THE
CONSULTATION EARLIER THAN THEY EXPECTED, AND THEY TOLD US
THEY WISHED TO RESUME THE TALKS AS SOON AS COULD BE
ARRANGED.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 134940

Q. HODDING, BACK ON THE PANAMA CANAL, CBS REPORTED LAST
NIGHT, I THINK, THAT THERE WAS A BREAKTHROUGH. THIS HAS
BEEN REPORTED NOW FOR OVER A WEEK BY VARIOUS PEOPLE, AND
I AM JUST WONDERING, IS THERE A BREAKTHROUGH? A. NO.

Q. COULD YOU ELABORATE ON THAT? A. NO. WE HAVE BEEN

SAYING THIS. WE ARE MAKING GOOD PROGRESS AND WE HOPE IT IS GOING TO CONTINUE TO BE A PRODUCTIVE ROUND OF TALKS. BUT WE WOULD NOT USE THE CHARACTERIZATION "BREAKTHROUGH".

Q. HOW CLOSE ARE WE TO ONE? A. I DON'T THINK THAT THAT IS A USEFUL SPECULATION, TO TRY TO PUT A TIME-FRAME ON HOW CLOSE OR HOW FAR APART WE ARE. WE DON'T KNOW. THERE IS NO WAY TO PREDICT IT AND WE HAVE NO FIXED TERMINATION DATE.

Q. TERMINATION OF WHAT? A. TERMINATION OF THESE TALKS AND A CONCLUSION ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

Q. CAN YOU DENY THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CBS REPORT, WHICH I THINK WAS THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL HAVE DEFENSE RIGHTS INDEFINITELY? A. I AM NOT PREPARED TO DENY OR CONFIRM ANY OF THE DETAILS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS INSOFAR AS THE SUBSTANCE OF WHAT THE TALKS CONCERN.

2. NO FURTHER QUESTIONS WERE ASKED ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8.

3. THE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE WAS PREPARED FOR THE NOON BRIEFING ON JUNE 9 ON AN "IF ASKED" BASIS.

Q. ARE THERE ANY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS? A. THE CURRENT ROUND RESUMED YESTERDAY AT 3:00 P.M. AND ADJOURNED AT 5:30 P.M.

Q. IS THERE GOING TO BE ANOTHER MEETING TODAY? A. IT HAS NOT BEEN DETERMINED AS YET.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 134940

Q. IS THERE ANY CHANGE IN THE PANAMANIAN DELEGATION?

A. THE PANAMANIAN DELEGATION (AMBASSADOR ROMULO ESCOBAR, MINISTER OF EDUCATION ARISTEDES ROYO AND ARCHITECT EDWIN FABREGA) WAS ENLARGED YESTERDAY BY THE INCLUSION OF DR. CARLOS LOPEZ GUEVARA, A PANAMANIAN ATTORNEY WHO HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS FOR MANY YEARS.

Q. IS THERE ANY SIGNIFICANCE IN THE FACT THAT DR. LOPEZ GUEVARA HAS JOINED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS? A. NO. AS I SAID BEFORE HE IS A MAN WITH LONG EXPERIENCE IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS.

Q. IS THERE ANY INDICATION AS TO HOW YESTERDAY'S SESSION WENT? A. AS USUAL, THE MEETING WAS VERY USEFUL.

4. THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE AT THE NOON PRESS BRIEFING ON JUNE 9, THURSDAY.

Q. HODDING, CAN YOU SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THE PANAMA TALKS?
A. WELL, RUNNING YOU THROUGH THE DRILL: THE CURRENT ROUND RESUMED YESTERDAY AT 3:00 P.M. AND ADJOURNED AT 5:30 P.M. AS OF MIDMORNING, IT HAD NOT YET BEEN DETERMINED WHETHER THERE WOULD BE A MEETING TODAY.

I WAS WRONG YESTERDAY. THERE WAS A CHANGE IN THE PANAMANIAN DELEGATION IN THAT IT WAS ENLARGED YESTERDAY BY THE INCLUSION OF DR. CARLOS LOPEZ GUEVARA, A PANAMANIAN ATTORNEY WHO HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS FOR MANY YEARS. I WOULD NOT ATTACH ANY AGREAT SIGNIFICANCE TO HIS JOINING THE DELEGATION AND I WOULD CHARACTERIZE YESTERDAY'S MEETING AS USEFUL.

Q. USEFUL? A. YES.

Q. A LAWYER, IS THAT WHY HE'S WAS IT PRODUCTIVE?
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 134940

A. I JUST HAVE A FEELING THAT THEY DON'T THINK THE SPOKESMAN CAN COME UP HERE AND SAY THE SAME THING EVERY DAY.

5. NO FURTHER QUESTIONS WERE ASKED AT THE PRESS BRIEFING ON THURSDAY, JUNE 9.

6. THE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE WAS PREPARED FOR THE NOON PRESS BRIEFING ON FRIDAY, JUNE 10.

Q. WE SEE THE PANAMANIAN AMBASSADOR IS COMING IN TO SEE SECRETARY VANCE THIS AFTERNOON AT 3:30. IS THAT IN CONNECTION WITH THE NEGOTIATIONS? A. NO. IT IS A COURTESY CALL. AS YOU MAY RECALL, SECRETARY VANCE WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY WHEN AMBASSADOR LEWIS PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS. SO THIS IS THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY THE AMBASSADOR WILL HAVE HAD TO PAY A COURTESY CALL ON THE SECRETARY.

Q. WILL THERE BE A NEGOTIATING SESSION TODAY ON THE CANAL TREATY? A. AS OF THIS TIME A MEETING HAS NOT BEEN SCHEDULED, BUT I HAVE NO DEFINITIVE INFORMATION.

VANCE

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